

ANE/AF-

MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT of the
CROSS-BORDER HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
TO AFGHANISTAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Scope of the Assessment

- I. Background
- II. Program Planning and Development Issues
 - A. Strategy Development and Transition Planning
 - B. Pace of Program Growth
 - C. Program Monitoring
 - D. Use of Notwithstanding Clause
- III. Project Design, Implementation and Evaluation
 - A. Design Process
 - B. Implementation Process
 - C. Evaluation
 - D. Resources
- IV. External Relations
- V. Internal Relations
- VI. Accountability and Financial Management

Scope: The scope of this Mission Management Assessment focussed on the internal management systems and external relations required to carry out the CBHA strategy. There was to be no de novo critique of the overall strategy. What was originally intended to be a focus on the current timeframe, however, had to be expanded to reflect the rapidly developing circumstances in settlement negotiations and the impact such potential changes might have on the future mode and level of program operations. In this report, we have tried to limit speculation about the future to program areas where such impact would likely be the strongest.

It is also important to note that, although fiscal accountability is a key issue for the program, we never intended to audit implementing entities or track end-use of AID-financed commodities in Afghanistan; the former has been done a number of times by appropriate USG offices while the latter is not possible under current conditions. The most the team could do on accountability was ensure that AID/Rep officials, contractors and grantees are addressing the issue systematically to the greatest possible extent. (See VI below on Accountability).

I. BACKGROUND

Background: By anyone's definition, AID's Cross-Border Humanitarian Assistance (CBHA) Program to Afghanistan is extraordinary. What began in the winter of 1985 as a set of small PVO grants initiated by the State Department and OPDA became AID's full charge upon Larry Crandall's arrival in Islamabad in September 1985. In three short years, the program has grown at an astounding pace--from \$8.3 million in FY 1985 to an expected \$68.5 million this year--and has diversified in funding resources (DA, ESF, PL 480, DOD) and program complexity with very limited growth in staff. The portfolio now includes components of: commodity procurement; food delivery; technical assistance and training in health, education and agriculture; excess DOD property distribution; and medical evacuation for wounded Afghans. The pace of program development reflects both the urgent realities of supporting a society within war-torn Afghanistan and the drive of key Congressional members to demonstrate U.S. support for that Resistance through large funding increases.

This rapid creation and expansion of support for the Afghan resistance can be attributed to the tireless efforts of AID/Rep Larry Crandall and his small but extraordinarily hard-working and productive staff. From the outset, his team has been unrelenting in pushing to improve conditions inside Afghanistan and to build the Alliance's institutional capacity to assist in reconstruction in a post-settlement Afghanistan. Historic documentation explicitly states that the fundamental objectives of the program are political--a fact which has shaped the program design and operation and, at times, has generated confusion and suspicion within AID. Nonetheless, this program is clearly viewed by supporters within the Administration, Congress, the Government of Pakistan, and other interested parties as enormously successful in meeting its objectives rapidly. We agree that the AID/Rep's Office has achieved a remarkable amount in a short time but are concerned about the high cost of this success on individuals and sustainable management systems.

The uniqueness of this program not only derives from its cross-border nature but also from its inherent tensions. The AID/Rep and his staff must delicately balance operational relationships (AID/ANE, USAID/Pakistan and PVOs) with political relationships (GOP's "existing mechanism", the 7-Party Alliance, Embassy/Islamabad, other embassies, and the U.S. Congress) just as they must balance short term, war-related humanitarian objectives with long term, developmental concerns. Throughout all, they must weigh expediency against responsible resource management in facing the sometimes equally compelling priorities of war casualties and accountability audits.

II. PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

A. Strategy Development and Transition Planning

Current strategy: The current strategy for the CBHA Program to Afghanistan was articulated in the original "Crandall Report" of June 1985 and, for the immediate future, remains relevant. In the absence of a settlement in Afghanistan and while the Resistance has validity, the program's objectives of humanitarian support to the Resistance and institutional strengthening of the Alliance should not be questioned. In broad terms, all the components of the current portfolio were envisioned in the Crandall Report and program development has followed the original conceptual framework.

Transition planning: In the foreseeable future, however, significant political changes in Afghanistan will require refashioning of the current (and likely to be growing) program. Though it is premature for us to comment on the specifics of such a program, important contingency planning is underway by the AID/Rep, the Embassy's Afghan Working Group, State/P and NEA. It is our strong sense that ANE/Washington must participate actively in this planning for several reasons:

- to ensure Agency policymakers are "on board" and engaged in whatever transition scenario is sketched;
- to demonstrate to Congress ANE's grasp of the priority of U.S. support to Afghan resettlement and reconstruction;
- to broaden the base of communication, involvement and support from ANE to the AID/Rep program;
- to ensure full technical review of proposed activities;
- to ensure continuity in support of the program as employee turnover occurs.

Historic frictions between Washington and the field must be reduced to achieve more collaborative strategy formulation. We have recommended possible measures to this end below in Section IV.A, External Relations.

Internal Collaborative Planning: The latest Action Plan was submitted in the spring of 1987 and no submission has been required for FY 88. We view this as appropriate as long as political changes don't render current workplans outdated. However, the collaborative planning process of Action Plan development last year was seen by AID/Rep staff as quite positive, productive and good for morale. Similar efforts to consciously step back from daily operations and jointly develop annual work plans or brainstorm further phases of

transition plans should be considered to encourage cross-fertilization of ideas and esprit de corps. At some less sensitive point in the future, this process should be broadened to include more interaction with contractors and PVOs.

RECOMMENDATION: ANE/W must actively involve itself in transition planning at appropriately high levels to ensure policy and program coordination with the field and other involved USG parties. (See recommendation below under IV.A.)

The AID/Rep should consciously seek opportunities for more collaborative internal planning that relates to both current programs and future planning.

B. Pace of Program Growth

The extraordinary rate of increase in the level of resources of this program (over 800% in 3 years) places tremendous pressures on the small direct-hire staff and the various contractors and grantees to implement programs rapidly. There is some question as to whether obligations may outstrip implementation capacity. (See III.E below on Pipeline/Mortgage.) Without exception, the major contractors state that their FY 88 disbursement rates would easily use up available funds and they question the sufficiency of funds based on planned expansion in project activities. In the case of health and education, MSH and UNO expect geometric expansion of costs from increased training (with corollary costs of salaries and equipment). However, it is not yet clear that the education project can meet its targets this year. In agriculture, VITA expects to broaden its private sector sales and move the rural works track into full swing. Finally, continuing procurements of vehicles, food and clothing under AMEG's Commodity Export Program would maintain a high disbursement rate, providing an absorptive capacity for uncommitted obligations from slower-disbursing projects.

Beyond disbursement rates are the more disturbing questions of: (a) the ability of the staff (limited for now in size by security and location) to keep pace with program growth, and (b) the impact of rapid funding increases on the efficiency of implementors and planners. While obligations increase geometrically and the implementation "burner" is "turned up" all the way, something must be sacrificed. That something may be good forward planning or an individual's health or sound management practices. The costs of such rapid growth must be acknowledged and carefully weighed by all decision-makers in the funding process.

Another concern which should be recognized focusses on the nature of increased disbursements: for the most part, these increases are being generated by assumption of rapidly increasing recurrent costs (salaries and transportation). This issue was discussed at the time of program inception and, for now, this policy makes sense. At some point in the future, the Agency must consciously articulate its policy on the appropriate level of recurrent costs it will assume, or face significant and indefinite external funding of such costs for a new Afghan government.

C. Program Monitoring

This report distinguishes between monitoring of commodities for the sake of fiscal accountability and monitoring the delivery and use of AID's inputs for program effectiveness. (The former issue is dealt with in Section VI below, Accountability and Financial Management.) For accomplishing the latter objective, the O/AID/Rep has had monitoring and evaluation plans developed for each of the major contracts which are intended to act as guidelines for data collection and analysis.

The team's findings on program monitoring are:

- a) In the final analysis, donors send goods and services into Afghanistan with the expectation that the mujahiddin command structure and existing market systems will allocate the use of the resources appropriately. The border is the ultimate point up to which donors can assure themselves with some certainty of responsible resource management and program effectiveness.
- b) Despite this reality, some PVOs are implementing and contractors are devising monitoring systems to track the delivery of goods and use of training inside Afghanistan (on a representative, not universal, basis.) They are instituting such systems for both their own management purposes and in response to O/AID/Rep concerns for accountability. They are, in fact, using such systems to generate information needed for project design and development.
- c) These systems rely on paid monitors who may or may not be known to the beneficiaries of the aid and who may or may not be providing accurate information. Attempts are made to verify and cross-check through different degrees of unobtrusive monitoring and through cross-sectoral information-sharing. In some cases, confidence is placed in longstanding personal relationships with Afghans. U.S. policy prevents any U.S. officials from entering Afghanistan for monitoring or any other purpose. In the end, therefore, U.S. accountability depends on U.S. confidence in these Afghan (and, sometimes, European) monitors.

d) Contractors have only recently developed and begun to implement these monitoring systems over the last few months. They are creating monitoring systems independent of the M&E plans drafted last spring, but are trying to get at some of the same management questions identified in those plans. As these systems are in an early phase of implementation, the O/AID/Rep has not yet developed a formal feedback system to use this project data in overall program management.

RECOMMENDATION: The O/AID/Rep should: (a) insist on sharing of monitoring experiences among contractors; (b) explore the utility of standardizing reporting from the various monitoring systems; and (c) with more experience in implementing monitoring systems, aggregate monitoring results beyond the project level and use them to manage its overall program.

D. Use of Notwithstanding Clause

In its authorizing language, Congress provided AID the authority of the notwithstanding clause. AID/Rep use of the "notwithstanding" clause creates discomfort in AID/W regarding the extent to which this program circumvents normal AID policies and regulations. This, of course, is felt strongly by those uncomfortable with the underlying political objectives of the program and somewhat less so by those merely unfamiliar with the extent of its use. This authority has been used sparingly but its very existence is seen by some as providing O/AID/Rep staff unusual leverage to avoid normal procedures. ANE guidelines provided by letter to the field require that the AID/Rep: first examine the contracting or procurement activity in question for the possibility of applying standard AID procedures; then, attempt to apply normal AID waiver authorities as possible; and, only failing these first two steps, invoke the "notwithstanding" authority. There are times, of course, when observers might interpret the urgency or priority of an action differently than the AID/Rep and, to that extent, exercise of this authority is always a judgment call. Nonetheless, the RLA believes that he is consulted on every occasion of its use and the AID/Rep knows of no occasion that has not been documented. The AID/Rep staff has been counselled on the need for conservative use and full documentation in invoking this authority. We accept that this authority is necessary here and that ANE guidelines are being observed. (The AID/Rep made clear his desire for AID/W to provide clarification of the extent of this authority.)

The question arises as to whether and how far this authority should extend into a post-settlement period. The AID/Rep strongly calls for such flexibility through at least resettlement and, possibly,

some portion of the reconstruction periods given the inevitable, extraordinary needs. If AID is not inclined to continue such a policy beyond the current cross-border circumstances, it should factor this into transition planning and be prepared to consult closely with Congress on the issue.

RECOMMENDATION: ANE/GC should provide formal guidance to O/AID/Rep on the limits of authority provided by the notwithstanding clause.

III. PROJECT DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION ISSUES

A. Design Process

1. Documentation: The peculiar circumstances of this program have resulted, once again, in non-traditional processes for project design. From the outset, AID/W devised unique documentation requirements to avoid the bureaucratic delays of the PID/PP review process. Activity Identification Memoranda (AIMs) and Activity Approval Memoranda (AAMs) are submitted to AID/W to provide a project description and special program considerations without the usual comprehensive set of economic, technical, social and environmental feasibility analyses. The operating assumption is that O/AID/Rep will provide the minimum detail needed to assure AID/W of the general advisability and feasibility of a proposed activity. Much of what would constitute normal PP detail is seen as impossible or unnecessary to collect or too sensitive for broad discussion in AID/W. This causes frustration and diminished involvement in AID/W, particularly on the part of technicians who feel that politics will inevitably override their technical inputs.

For the most part, AIMs have been very short pieces written by Crandall and his staff, while AAMs have issued from contract design teams (who frequently have gone on to implement their designs.) Projects have been conceived with "rolling designs"--a term used to signify broadly conceived objectives and workplans which become more specifically developed in the course of implementation as targets of opportunity present themselves. Given the unprecedented nature of this program and the uncertainties of the war environment, the "rolling design" concept has been appropriate. As new, significant elements of a project are proposed, O/AID/Rep submits them to AID/W for approval. However, due to reliance on technically strong contract teams and short deadlines, O/AID/Rep has solicited (or been offered) very little input from AID/W during the design stage. Instead, an AAM has usually arrived in AID/W in final form with unusual pressure to approve it immediately. This represents missed opportunities both for use of internal Agency talent and for improved support/communication between Washington and the field. (It should be noted that there is a strong sense among O/AID/Rep staff that AID/W requires excessive review time for field proposals.)

2. Reviews: An informal committee system exists for reviewing project designs which includes the project officer, program officer, AID/Rep, USAID Controller and RLA. The USAID Controller and Contracts Offices have not been effectively involved, nor have other project officers been asked for their insights (except for the USAID technical inputs in the very early stages of this program). The smallness and informality of the O/AID/Rep facilitates daily communication but also prevents conscious, formal opportunities to brainstorm, exchange ideas and benefit from others' experience.

RECOMMENDATION: The O/AID/Rep should continue to solicit more technical review and advice from AID/W in the upcoming reassessments and redesigns of their four major contract activities. ANE/W should ensure full TDY support from ANE/TR or other appropriate offices in these redesign efforts.

The AID/Rep or his Deputy should ensure more effective project committee functioning through formal review meetings with full participation by USAID support officers.

8. Implementation Process

1. Overview: Implementation in this program is characterized by:

- heavy reliance on contractors for technical and operational direction;
- a politically complex set of "counterpart" and client relationships--the GOP, the Alliance parties, contractors, PVOs, other embassies, Congress, other USG agencies--managed necessarily from a distance;
- extraordinary pressure to move paper and money rapidly (creating never-ending deadlines, "not enough time to think", and a red tape-cutting mentality on documentation and planning);
- lack of organizational depth in project management resulting in a work overload for project officers and necessarily limited cross-coverage of project management in the absence of the principals;
- no formal system of joint review of implementation status or issues;

- finally, and most importantly, tremendous efforts on the part of talented project officers to balance all the pressures, complex relationships, and external scrutiny while keeping sight of their objectives.

2. Project Implementation Reviews: No formal system exists within O/AID/Rep to review implementation status (e.g., PIRs), primarily for two reasons: (a) the staff believes its small size lends itself to "simultaneous" knowledge of issues; and (b) the rush of daily operations (exacerbated by frequent visits from outsiders) leaves little or no time for reviews. It is apparent from discussions with staff, however, that informality and physical proximity do not always translate into full information-sharing. Conscious use of a few hours each month or quarter would encourage reflection and forward planning and could extend the inhouse resources more broadly at minimal cost.

RECOMMENDATION:

The AID/Rep should consider instituting regular (say, quarterly or trimester) implementation reviews to provide a formal opportunity for cross-project, cross-sectoral interchanges and forward planning. These should include key USAID support staff and could occasionally include contractors. The results should be shared with ANE/W (through AID/Rep and AID/W TDYs) to give a broader picture of overall program status than now achieved with contractors' reports.

C. Evaluation

The O/AID/Rep understands the functional value and makes good use of evaluation. The entire health-related PVO portfolio was closely examined in the summer of 1987. Scopes of work are underway for major reassessment and redesign teams for three of the four major sectoral projects this year. Management-based monitoring and evaluation is particularly key to effective implementation of this program given the limited breadth of input on the original projects and their "rolling design" nature.

The fact that evaluation of project purpose and impact achievement is obviously limited under cross-border circumstances places great importance on implementation of monitoring and data collection systems for each major project. Getting accurate information and certainty of results is extremely difficult, but neither can a program be satisfied to just deliver the goods and money to the border. Without feedback that gets effectively used by O/AID/Rep, there is limited knowledge as to whether the \$50-60 million of U.S. assistance each year is achieving its stated purpose. This fact is

understood by the O/AID/Rep staff; greater attention to monitoring and evaluation is a function of finding the time in already unmanageable schedules. The recent arrival of the Deputy may help with this, but the AID/Rep should also consider hiring local expertise.

RECOMMENDATION: The AID/Rep should hire locally a PSC Evaluation Officer (preferably to be located in Peshawar).

D. Resources

O/AID/Rep has access to liberal dollar resources to design and implement projects but has severe restrictions on direct-hire and PSC staff to carry out what is effectively a full Mission program funded at a very substantial level. As time passes, more seems to be expected of the staff in terms of long-term planning, documentation of the program, and contractor/grantee oversight. (See Section V, Internal Relations, for staffing issues.)

1. Technical Skills: We examined the question of whether the staff has sufficient technical expertise to effectively design and implement its sectoral activities. Basically, the staff has depended on the technical expertise of their contractors (with very limited technical inputs from AID/W.) The field sense is that what the program needs is good project managers with hands-on experience in crisis situations who can "get things done." While this was certainly true in the early stages of program development, it will become less critical further into implementation when project management requires more attention to technical program adjustment/direction.

2. Project Development Skills: The question also arises as to whether the program requires more input in the skill areas usually identified with an experienced project development officer (backstop 94). The currently heavy requirement for project scopes of work, contractor PIO/Ts, waivers of competition, contract amendments, etc. is being met by individual project officers in consultation with the Program Officer (cum PDO) and USAID/Pakistan support staff (contract, controller, RLA). Some feel that stronger cases for exceptions to competition and other project rationales could be better built with more help from a staff member more experienced in contracting and procurement procedures. The O/AID/Rep has not identified at this time the highest priority for staff additions, although some on the staff believe this lies in project management deepening (i.e., assistant POs) rather than broadening of staff skills.

RECOMMENDATION: In the future, the O/AID/Rep and AID/W should seek to fill openings with officers who have both appropriate technical backgrounds and project management experience.

Until staffing constraints will permit a full-fledged USDB with project development and broad implementation experience to be hired, the O/AID/Rep should solicit regular TDY assistance from among those in ANE/PD or other offices familiar with the program.

E. Pipeline/Mortgage

1. **Status:** This program has experienced no pipeline problems to date, despite the extremely fast growth in the OYB. Last year, obligations totalled \$31.4 million in DA and ESF, \$3 million in PL 480 and about \$9.5 million worth of DOD resources. Expenditures totaled about \$26.2 million in ESF and DA, \$1.7 of the \$2 million of DOD funds administered at post, and the full PL 480 value--for an overall expenditure rate of about 85%. Given the early stage of many of the activities, the expenditure range of 60-85% per project (with 108% under the CEP) is exceptionally good.

Despite rapidly growing sector activities, we should expect to see a slightly growing pipeline in FYs 88-89, given: the 50% program increase in DA and ESF this year (possibly matched next year); the particularly large project funding increases in education and health; and possible constraints on activity increases in the sector projects. (See Section II.B., Pace of Program Growth.) We do not foresee problems with this probable pipeline size.

The nature of CBHA projects, the lack of bilateral grant agreements (except for PL 480), and the limited term of the major contracts indicates that mortgage is not an issue for this program.

2. **Deob/Reob:** The O/AID/Rep has not had occasion to use Jeob/reob authority given the overall successful disbursement rates throughout the entire program. Only one component of the agriculture sector project is particularly problematic (Track 1) and the AID/Rep has consciously insisted on the contractor sticking with efforts in this project element (for programmatic and political reasons.)

IV. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

A. Lack of Mutual Understanding Between Field and Washington

The Afghanistan CBHA program operates with conflicting views and a lack of mutual understanding between AID officers in the field and in Washington. There are also significant differences of opinion within the US Government concerning AID involvement in programs with such severely limited accountability for the delivery of goods and services. Information is often closely held because delivery of project commodities is dependent on mujahiddin who also engage in military operations. The GOP also insists on avoidance of publicity for domestic political reasons. Examples of conflicting views include:

- A field concern that no one in ANE fully understands or appreciates the political dimension of the program.
- A concern held by several officers in AID/W that the political dimension cannot serve as the only basis for project activities in lieu of developmental/humanitarian analyses to support requirements for assistance.
- An AID/W concern that the sensitivity of the program may lead to public misperceptions that AID has programs and activities that are not justified by developmental or humanitarian objectives.
- A view shared by the IG and other AID officers that AID's traditional concern for accountability is compromised by such programs and that AID should avoid similar involvements.
- A view expressed by some senior State officers that such assistance programs should be replicated in future low intensity conflicts.
- A high level of support for the program by the Administration and several members of Congress.

As a result of such divergent views, there is limited collaboration within AID on matters of policy formulation and project execution. Accordingly, we propose appointment of a senior level officer within ANE to perform a policy planning and coordination role. The appointed officer should become intimately familiar with all aspects of the program and should represent AID at the policy level in interagency meetings, with external groups, and with Congressional staff. The officer should serve as a coordinator and, where necessary, a mediator between the field and AID/W offices in matters of policy and program planning. We feel that the role of the senior

officer will be complementary to the operational functions performed by the Afghanistan Desk Officer.

RECOMMENDATION: ANE should appoint a senior officer to perform a policy planning and coordination role for the CBHA program.

With the appointment of a senior officer as recommended above, it should be possible to delineate field and AID/W responsibilities for planning postwar activities. AID/Rep Larry Crandall should participate in meetings in Washington to establish agreement on field and Washington planning responsibilities and to ensure that agreement is obtained on the functions and authority of the senior officer who will represent ANE and the AID/Rep in interagency and other meetings. We also feel that the AID/Rep should visit Washington more frequently as the program transition process unfolds. (Such travel will require additional delegation of authority to Deputy AID/Rep Jack Miller as described in Section V.)

RECOMMENDATION: The AID/Rep should visit Washington to establish a close working relationship with the officer appointed to perform the CBHA planning and coordination role and to reach agreement on transition planning responsibilities. Subsequently, TDY travel between AID/W and the field should occur 3-4 times a year by both the AID/Rep and the Policy Planning Officer to ensure continuing close collaboration.

B. Communication and Coordination - Peshawar and Islamabad

AID officers posted in Islamabad make frequent trips to Peshawar where contractors and several PVOs manage project implementation. These visits and frequent trips to Islamabad by contract employees enable project officers to monitor project activities while performing their many other functional responsibilities. There is no resident, US direct hire officer in Peshawar. (See Section V for recommendations concerning staffing.) In the absence of a resident officer, no one regularly facilitates coordination among the four major contractors who employ a total of 213 US, expatriate, Pakistani and Afghan employees. There is also insufficient coordination between the contractors and the 12 PVOs who receive AID grants and are represented in Peshawar.

The seven party Alliance includes functional committees, e.g. health, education, and agriculture. The committees vary considerably in performance capabilities. We learned that the Agriculture Committee, which has not been convened to meet with the VITA Chief of Party for over two months, is probably the least

effective committee in serving AID project objectives. Contractors are often able to facilitate project implementation by meeting with individual party leaders. In discussions with the principal GOP representative in Peshawar, we learned that he, too, works more directly with the parties than with the "Alliance" as an organization representing the parties. We agree that the "fractious" relationship among members of the Alliance may impede the program but feel that contractors can overcome some of these problems by working directly with parties.

We feel that there is limited understanding by AID/W, PVOs and others of the tenuous relationship between contractors and the "Alliance" as an integrated body. The inability of the Alliance to act unanimously or to be fully represented in AID projects has not been an apparent, major deterrent to project implementation. Projects are implemented through parties and commanders with GOP approval and coordination. Commanders who attempt to "manipulate aid" (in the words of the principal GOP officer in Peshawar), are dependent on the parties which, in turn, are subject to GOP approval in the allocation of commodities and other forms of assistance. GOP control of the program is further achieved through frequent, individual meetings with each contract chief of party. Unlike more traditional AID programs, there are no technical counterpart agencies or any single government planning ministry. We feel that an understanding of the relationships which exist among party leaders, Alliance committees, contractors and the GOP is important for:

- AID/W appreciation of the volatile nature of the program and the continuing need for flexibility in project design and implementation.
- Improved PVO acceptance of the mutual assistance roles performed by contractors and themselves.
- AID recognition of the impermanence of fixed organizational relationships as policy planning takes place during the transition period.

D. Relations with USAID/Pakistan

Support to the O/AID/Rep activities from USAID/Pakistan is, for the most part, excellent. The relationship with USAID/OFM is discussed below in Section VI, Accountability and Financial Management. O/AID/Rep staff have been frustrated by what they considered ineffective support from the individual in USAID/CC (Contract Office) backstopping their program, but this problem has been resolved by changing the assigned contracting officer. Support from the RLA and USAID/EXO is comprehensive and timely. There is little or no interaction between the technical officers of USAID/Pakistan

and project officers of O/AID/Rep--a situation which is understandable given workloads and time constraints but which represents a loss of potentially useful technical input into the CBHA project activities.

E. Publicity

AID has deliberately avoided publicity of the program at the insistence of the GOP based on the GOP's stated desire to protect U.S. and Afghan individuals involved in the Resistance and to maintain domestic credibility in their public policies. Crsndall has given off-the-record backgrounders to the Christian Science Monitor, TIME Magazine, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. However, full denial of information to the press has increasingly raised suspicions that the program has covert elements possibly linked to military objectives. We understand that the GOP may be willing to relax opposition to publicity once the current period of delicate peace negotiations is negotiated (possibly within two-three months.) We accept GOP sensitivity to publicity, but believe that AID must not be misperceived as an agency engaged in clandestine activities. Furthermore, international acknowledgement of the important U.S. humanitarian support to the Afghan people could be useful in a post-settlement period in mobilizing multilateral financing for resettlement, reconstruction and development.

RECOMMENDATION:

AID should aggressively seek agreement with the GOP to publicize the Afghan CBHA program as soon as possible, and follow such agreement with more active engagement with the news media, both in AID/W and by the AID/Rep. More active AID/W interaction with the media should begin immediately.

V. INTERNAL RELATIONS

A. Staff Size and Role of the Deputy

As explained earlier in this report, the CBHA program began with modest dollar amounts and a small American staff. The program has grown in size and complexity but with very little change in the highly centralized management style of the AID/Rep in Islamabad and with nominal increases in staff. The staff of six US direct hire professionals cannot adequately monitor the existing array of contracts, grants and other forms of assistance. For example, the project officer responsible for the education project and the commodity export program acknowledges that he currently devotes only about ten percent of his time to the University of Nebraska

education project in Peshawar because of the management demands of AMEG contract administration in Islamabad. This acute staff shortage exists at a time when planning has begun for a transitional program and when maturing projects require more monitoring attention than in the past. The postwar planning requirements and the need for close collaboration with ANE suggest the need for additional travel by the AID/Rep as recommended in Section IV.

We feel that the first step in meeting monitoring and planning needs and in preparing for AID/Rep absences from post should be a prompt separation of functions between AID/Rep Crandall and Deputy Miller. The deputy has been functioning as alter ego during his initial ten weeks at post and is learning more about the program as he undertakes several specifically assigned tasks. We suggest that the learning process be accelerated through assignment of overall management responsibility for Mission operations with the exception of policy formulation, program planning and external relations which should remain with the AID/Rep. Miller has already been given responsibility for rating the performance of the US professional staff. The delegation of operational responsibility and related authority would support and clarify his supervisory function.

RECOMMENDATION: The AID/Rep should delegate primary responsibility and authority for supervision of Mission operations to the Deputy AID/Rep.

B. Role of the Program Officer

Since program inception, the Program Officer has had responsibility for the program and project development functions within the office, and for coordination with the Executive Office, Controller's Office, and Contract Office. He obviously could not handle all of these functions fully and had to concentrate on immediate operational problems. His need for help was recognized with the addition of an Assistant Program Officer position last year. However, the job was filled (out of cycle) by a senior officer with management and non-AID project management skills. (The officer had been detailed to State for years.) This officer has willingly assisted the Program Officer, but has probably spent 80% of his time as a project manager for the DOD-financed activities.

In assuming the operational responsibility described above, the Deputy AID/Rep should relieve the program officer of administrative functions such as US personnel management and supervision of the office manager. This reallocation of duties should give the program officer sufficient time to provide more training to the recently hired PSN who has already taken over the preparation of program budget reports previously prepared by the Program Officer until December. The PSN is quite capable of analytical functions now

handled personally by the program officer once he learns more about AID procedures and requirements. His past experience as a financial analyst with ARAMCO would probably enable him to perform project planning and evaluation functions with proper guidance by the program officer.

RECOMMENDATION: The Deputy AID/Rep should supervise the PSC Office Manager and assume responsibility for personnel management and Executive Office activities currently performed by the Program Officer.

RECOMMENDATION: A USDE or PSC with knowledge and understanding of AID's program and project development systems should be assigned to work with the program officer to provide more support to the project officers. Also, the Program Officer should more quickly train the FSN program assistant so that he can take full advantage of his professional skills.

C. Office Operations in Peshawar

The AID/Rep is currently represented in Peshawar by a US PSC operating out of the U.S. Consulate (with frequent support of the principal Consular Officer.) The PSC is capable of performing a broad range of program functions and effectively interacting with Afghans who may be directly or indirectly involved in the program. He currently performs a liaison function between Islamabad and Peshawar and reportedly operates inefficiently without benefit of administrative (secretarial) support. In general, we feel that the PSC is underutilized in his professional expertise, and that he is not performing a particularly useful function in his liaison role. Given the extent of program operations in Peshawar and the need to facilitate coordination among contractors and grantees as noted in Section IV, we feel that at least one USDH project officer should be posted in Peshawar. This officer should manage a regional office and supervise staff (including the agriculture project officer, agricultural economist, a possible evaluation specialist, and any FSNs assigned to the office.) The officer should provide assistance and general monitoring for projects in Peshawar, represent the AID Rep in relations with the local GOP principal officer, and facilitate communication and coordination among AID contractors and grantees.

RECOMMENDATION: A USDE officer should be assigned to Peshawar to manage a regional office and to perform other functions as described above.

D. Need For Economic Analysis

Information is being gathered through an agricultural survey and other reports obtained from monitors and observers in Afghanistan. This information should be analyzed by a competent economist for use in program planning and implementation of existing projects. We understand that the AID/Rep has been given approval to recruit a US PSC economist who has substantial experience in Afghanistan and to assign the economist to Peshawar. We support this decision.

E. Recruitment of Additional PSNs

Staff additions and the realignment of functional responsibilities recommended in the preceding paragraphs will not provide sufficient staff resources to permit adequate monitoring and program planning. Professional staff members will continue to be overburdened with functions which would be performed by junior officers or PSNs at other Missions. PSNs are particularly useful in responding to requests for information from support offices and for preparation of routine program documents. PSNs have not been employed to any extent because of the sensitivity of the program and the extensive security classification of documents. We feel that with proper supervision, many of the functions performed by US officers can be delegated to PSNs without risk to security concerns. PSNs are currently employed by other elements of the Embassy with presumably similar security requirements.

RECOMMENDATION:	O/AID/Rep should review project design and implementation functions traditionally performed by PSNs and identify those which could be performed for the CBHA program without compromising valid security concerns. Workload requirements should be established and an appropriate number of additional PSNs should be recruited.
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F. Recruitment of Additional US Professional Staff

The professional USDB staff, relieved of some functions by PSN assistance as recommended above, will still be overburdened by planning and implementation functions. This problem will become more acute with the development of new projects to be implemented in the postwar period. We suggest that the staff be augmented by: adding at least one USDB officer; sharing the services of a food officer to be assigned to the Counselor for Refugees (with shared responsibility for EER preparation); and locally recruiting spouses of USG employees (for example, to fill the need for an Evaluation Specialist). Spousal employment of secretaries has been very beneficial to the O/AID/Rep operation and we see no reason why the office cannot successfully compete with other post operations for

the employment of professionally qualified, local hire, US employees. The spouses should be qualified by education and some appropriate experience to perform entry level tasks as assistant POs.

RECOMMENDATION: O/AID/Rep should add one USDB Officer, obtain agreement to sharing the services of the food officer who reports to the Counselor for Refugees, and recruit US spouses to serve as an Evaluation Specialist and assistant POs, as available. (If an appropriate candidate for the food officer position cannot be identified, the AID/Rep may find it more practical to hire a PSC for this function.)

G. Use of TDY Assistance

Technical assistance will be required from AID/W to evaluate existing projects and to plan new program initiatives. We suggest that TDY assignments also be used to broaden understanding of the program, supplement technical expertise available at post, and provide project officer coverage during periods when officers are away from post.

H. Office Space

The expansion of staff in Islamabad and Peshawar as recommended in this management assessment will probably require doubling of the current office space. If it is imperative to mix the new PSCs and FSNs with USDB, space will be required within a USG compound. Security concerns must be considered in locating additional space, but we have learned through discussions with Embassy and USAID/Pakistan officers that these concerns can be accommodated. We suggest that planning for additional office space begin immediately.

RECOMMENDATION: O/AID/Rep should immediately seek office space in Peshawar (and begin the difficult process of obtaining U.S. compound office space in Islamabad) to accommodate additional staff recommended in this report.

I. Staff Training

With staff expansion there should be more time for training existing staff and even more compelling reasons for training new staff. All USDB and FSN staff should be scheduled for appropriate training at post, within the region, or in Washington. All officers with project responsibilities should attend project design and implementation courses if they have not done so. Supervisors should

also attend appropriate management courses in connection with home leave of other travel to Washington.

I. Staff Morale

Despite the extraordinary pressures, unusually long work hours and demands for frequent road travel to Peshawar, staff morale is surprisingly good. This is largely because of perceptions that the work is important and that the program is achieving its objectives. Morale suffers to a degree from a sense that the program has less than full support from AID/W. We also found little evidence of positive reinforcement (a pat on the back) from supervisors. We suggest that supervisors at all levels examine personal management styles and ensure regular, positive reinforcement. The dedicated and hard-working staff at this post should certainly be considered for AID performance awards. We must also register our concern over the cumulative impact on staff of maintaining the extremely heavy workload and long hours required to date. This reinforces the need for staff increases noted above.

J. Physical Security

There is increasing incidence of violence--car bombs, other bombs, personal threats, etc.--throughout Pakistan, but particularly in Peshawar and Quetta. This represents a growing threat to O/AID/Rep staff, contractors and grantees. Although the AID/Rep has expressed great concern for the safety of his employees (both American and local), there is little more that can be done beyond current security measures to assure safety in these outlying posts. This could become a morale problem in the future, but we do not see much evidence of staff morale suffering because of it at this point. Security, however, is a major factor and constraint in obtaining additional office space, especially for USDH.

K. Full Mission Status

With the internal decentralization of authority recommended in this report, the AID/Rep office should be converted to full Mission status to acknowledge the level of program responsibility already exercised by Larry Crandall and his staff. This will require ANE to repeat an earlier attempt to make the case to M/PM for upgrading. Because of GOP sensitivities surrounding their funding levels and the costs of hosting Afghan refugees, it will also require careful assurances to the GOP that such an organizational change does not threaten our bilateral relationship with Pakistan.

If ANE/W anticipates an appreciable delay in this change of status, we suggest that AID formally establish the AOSC of Deputy AID Representative at the FE-OC grade. (AID does not have a position classification for Deputy AID Rep; Jack Miller is improperly

classified as an FS-01 Supervisory Program Officer.) The Director and Deputy Director positions, or (in the interim), the AID/Rep and Deputy AID/Rep positions, then should be appropriately graded at the FE-MC and FE-OC levels respectively. (We understand that AID is now in the process of deleting grade designations for SFS positions. That action will not resolve the inequity in Miller's case or substitute for conversion of the AID/Rep office to full Mission status.)

RECOMMENDATION: AID/W should grant full mission status to the current Office of the AID/Rep and grade Director and Deputy Director positions accordingly.

VI. ACCOUNTABILITY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. Accountability for Use of Commodities and Cash

Acceptance of Risk: Traditional AID programs include extensive monitoring procedures to ensure that goods and services are delivered to intended users or beneficiaries. The CBHA program is unique in that U.S. policy prevents direct AID monitoring by U.S. officials of commodity deliveries and cash payments beyond the Afghanistan border. Some monitoring by Afghans and Europeans does occur within Afghanistan, but it is generally understood by AID that confirmation of the delivery of commodities and cash cannot be obtained because of war conditions and reliance on non-conventional delivery systems, e.g. mujahiddin commanders. As recognized by the AID/Rep, the dilemma for AID is that this recognition of risk cannot absolve AID of ensuring, to the extent possible, that commodities and services are used for humanitarian purposes. This dilemma becomes more pointed in the face of increasing quantities of cash and marketable commodities which must be delivered into Afghanistan through systems with limited controls. It is particularly important for O/AID/Rep to share information with ANE on any accountability problems in order to maintain program credibility and ensure appropriate attention to policy implications.

Risks and monitoring limitations are described in the following paragraphs:

PL 480, Title II Wheat: PL 480 wheat is released from GOP warehouses and trucked to party warehouses near the border. Non-US employees of ANEG accompany some of these deliveries to party warehouses, but GOP controls through a series of checkpoints on roads provide more adequate assurance that the wheat is delivered to these points near the border. Based on conversations with the senior GOP official in Peshawar, it appears that GOP control procedures effectively preclude diversion of wheat for sale in

Pakistan. It is also unlikely that wheat is diverted to refugee camps on the Pakistan side of the border given the extensive quantity of wheat available to these camps through the U.N. program.

The senior GOP officer in Peshawar explained that much of the wheat is made available for distribution to Afghans who live near the border on the Afghanistan side and that wheat has been available to feed civilians who fled to border areas during recent, heavy fighting near Khost. He also advised us that, in the past, commanders located in distant areas have sold wheat in Afghanistan to avoid high transport costs, but that wheat is no longer distributed to commanders from distant provinces.

The past GOP practice of distributing wheat equally among the parties has been changed. According to the GOP official whom we interviewed, wheat is now allocated to commanders based on distribution capability. We were not able to obtain more extensive information concerning revised allocation procedures and suggest that O/AID/Rep meet with appropriate GOP officials to obtain clarification of procedures now followed in the allocation, control and monitoring of wheat distributed to commanders.

CEP and Project-Funded Commodities: Commodities purchased in Pakistan by AMEG for the Commodity Export Program are delivered by suppliers to AMEG facilities in Peshawar and Quetta. The commodities are trucked to party warehouses near the border under the same procedures and GOP controls as described above for PL 480 wheat. AMEG has been unable to monitor commodity distribution into Afghanistan, but local hire employees visit Pakistan markets regularly to confirm that these commodities and excess property acquired through DOD are not being sold in Pakistan. AMEG employees told us that very few items have been found as a result of such market monitoring. The risk of sale of CEP commodities will rise as high cost items such as automotive parts and tools are included in the program. GOP ability to control return of small, high value items from border areas to markets in Pakistan is more limited than their ability to prevent the return of wheat. We suggest that procurement of high cost, readily marketable items be minimized.

AMEG also procures commodities such as pharmaceuticals for other AID contractors. Such commodities are delivered to contractors for subsequent distribution to clinics, schools and other project sites in Afghanistan. Monitoring is accomplished through visits to such facilities by Afghan survey teams and other visitors.

Excess Property: AMEG employees meet DOD flights, observe the unloading and subsequent display of unpacked property, maintain records of goods received, and monitor Pakistan markets for evidence of the sale of property as noted above. According to AMEG employees, all control and distribution of excess property is

conducted by the GOP without further participation by the contractor. The reported absence of any significant quantity of such items in the Pakistan markets is presumed to indicate that these commodities are not being diverted for sale in Pakistan. With the opening in March of a USG-financed warehouse facility, the GOP has indicated a willingness to provide more access to excess property distribution by AMEG employees.

Cash Payments: A Cash for Food program is conducted through dollar grants to several PVOs. A rather extensive review of the program was conducted about one year ago by Bob Bakley with several follow-ups by O/AID/Rep's non-federal auditor, Harold Gill. In his report, Bakley described the determined and apparently successful efforts of European representatives who have delivered these cash payments to recipients in Afghanistan and have obtained evidence of receipt. (The O/AID/Rep is reassessing the design of this program to emphasize cash for community development in recognition of alternative uses for the cash.)

Contractors are also making cash payments in Afghanistan for salaries of health workers, teachers and rural works laborers. We did not attempt to review procedures followed by contractors in the control or monitoring of such payments.

RECOMMENDATION: The AID/Rep should task Harold Gill with review of these cash payment procedures in conjunction with his continuing financial reviews of contractors. (See Section VI B, Financial Management, below.)

B. Financial Management

An assessment of the USAID/Pakistan Controller operations was conducted during the period 01/11/88 to 01/31/88. Based on the review, we concluded that the functions of the Controller's Office are being carried out in a highly satisfactory manner. The Office has a very competent Foreign Service National Staff and sound systems of internal controls are in place to protect U.S. Government resources. Financial services such as voucher processing, internal and external accounting reports, budgeting and financial analysis are being accomplished on a timely basis. Nonetheless, we noted some areas of financial management that require attention, such as the need to aggressively follow-up on outstanding advances, outstanding bills for collection, open obligations/commitments and the submission of expenditure documentation. Specific comments that impact on or relate to the activities of the O/AID/REP follow:

Accounting Records: The MACS reports currently do not provide adequate information for management to monitor the program. The 12/31/87 MACS reports showed obligations of \$51.0 million,

disbursements of \$15.5 million, accruals of \$18.6 million and advances of \$5.2 million. We estimate that approximately \$3-5 million in disbursements and \$5-10 million in advances have not been recorded due to a lack of receipt of Advice of Charges (AOCS) from AID/Washington. This has resulted primarily from use of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) payments requested by USAID/Pakistan Controller through AID/Washington and to a lesser extent as a result of the use of Treasury LOC for two contractors. A mechanism needs to be developed to provide current disbursement and advance information to management. This could be accomplished by maintaining "memorandum" records to include EFT payments or by entering EFT payments in MACS at the time requested and recording them as a reconciling item in the official reports.

The AID/REP maintains extensive records on the status of obligations, expenditures and pipeline. It appeared that these were being developed in order to meet programing needs and to reconcile with the MACS records. A recent effort had been undertaken to restructure the MACS records to the needs of management. An FSN PSC was recently hired by the AID/REP and is working as a liaison with the USAID/Pakistan O/FM. Efforts to improve the official MACS records should continue so as to minimize the extent of "unofficial" records needed to be maintained by the O/AID/REP and to ensure consistency in financial reporting.

Outstanding Advances: Much of the O/AID/REP program is financed by large up-front advances to several PVOs and three non-profit contractors. Also, large advances are provided to AMEG as the procurement agent for the Commodity Export Program and the other three contractors. The recorded advances as of 12/31/87 exceed \$5 million. However, as noted above, we estimate that total advances may be understated by approximately \$10 million (excluding Treasury LOC financing). Despite the large amount of outstanding advances it appeared that most advances were made to meet current disbursement needs (less than 90 days). However, we noted in some instances that advances were made for as much as a six month requirement. Moreover, there is a need to establish systematic procedures for monitoring the amount of advances and to follow-up with grantees/contractors to ensure prompt receipt of liquidation vouchers.

Documentation for PVO and Contractor Expenditures: Prior to the establishment of the Office of the AID Representative in Islamabad several grants were made without the normal pre-award surveys and review of grantee accounting systems. The O/AID/REP recognized this problem and has contracted with a former AID auditor to conduct financial reviews of contractor/grantee systems and internal controls. To date, eleven reports have been issued. Results were mixed, with accounting systems ranging from excellent to non-existent. As a result of these reviews, a number of PVOs have

hired accountants to establish financial controls and systems. Significant progress has been made in this area. These efforts should continue to ensure that expenditure reports are well documented and current.

Treasury Letter of Credit (LOC) Financing: Two contractors, MSH & VITA, are financed by LOC. All other contractors and grantees are on a periodic advance or reimbursement basis, as applicable. The following problems with the LOCs were noted:

a) Both contracts contain a "logistic support" element which is retained for direct payment of contractor support items (rent, travel, utilities, vehicle maintenance, etc.) by USAID/Pakistan. In both instances, the LOC had been established for the full amount of the contract/amendment. The LOCs need to be reduced to ensure that the contracts are not over-disbursed.

b) VITA: Information was not available in USAID/Pakistan files to determine if the LOC had been amended for a \$573,900.00 grant and \$1.5 million contract. Discussions with the VITA financial officer indicate that he has had a problem receiving funds from the home office. He has borrowed funds on two occasions because of delays in receipt of funds. No expenditure reports have been received from VITA on either the grant or contract. In view of the fact that a large portion of the current contract will be for local currency expenditures and the difficulty that we have experienced with VITA management, consideration should be given to withdrawing the LOC and using the periodic advance method of financing.

Operating Expenses: No deficiencies in OE availability were noted. However, the FY 88 budget level has been established at \$650,000 which is \$100,000 less than the ABS requested amount. With the growth of the CBHA program, the need for operating expense funds should be closely monitored so that any increased needs can be budgeted and requested at an early date. It is highly unlikely that the budget level of \$650,000 for FY 88 will be adequate.

Controller Involvement and Oversight: Discussions with the USAID/Pakistan Controller and staff indicate that the unique nature of the O/AID/REP program has been recognized. The Controller's Office has been responsive to the special needs and has provided expeditious services when required. The USAID Controller stated that he did not exercise "normal" controllership of the O/AID/REP program, but provided advice, assistance and services as requested. The deficiencies noted above are not of a systemic nature, but rather, those that require a special effort, close supervision or monitoring, usually by a USDB staff member. Both the Pakistan and Afghan programs are continuing to grow. With the expected growth in expenditure levels and a non-traditional program comes an inherent

increased level of risk and consequently the need for additional monitoring and hands-on management. It is our opinion that an additional American Staff member should be added to the Controller's Office.

Local Currency Special Account: In FY 1986, a PL 480 Title II agreement was signed with the GOP to provide 43,000 MTs of wheat and 17,000 MTs of soybean oil. The soybean oil was to be sold to the Ghee Corporation to generate funds for inland transportation of the wheat. The funds were to be deposited into a special account with the use and disbursement of the funds jointly agreed between the GOP and O/AID/REP. Management of the special account has been unsatisfactory. Attempts by the O/AID/REP to obtain agreement on the amount of generation and procedures for programing and disbursing the funds have been unsuccessful. Consequently, Washington has agreed with the O/AID/REP proposal for a negotiated settlement based on evidence that: (a) the wheat has been delivered to the final destination; (b) the proceeds of sale of the soybean oil are a function of the market price; and (c) the transportation costs are substantially in excess of the likely generation of local currency. The O/AID/REP received approval from Washington on 1/28/88 for a \$4 million transportation grant. These funds will be administered by the O/AID/REP and USAID/Pakistan Controller for payment of inland transportation of 40,000 MTs of wheat approved for the FY 1988 Title II program. The AID/REP should conclude the negotiation of the previous PL 480, Title II agreement and establish firm agreement with the GOP on procedures for payment of inland transportation costs prior to any disbursement from the transportation grant.

RECOMMENDATION: The USAID/Controller and AID/Rep should submit to the Agency Controller in AID/W within one month a list of recommended actions and responsible parties to address the issues identified above.

LIST OF CONTACTS

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Pakistan

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Kim Oldham, Secretary
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Rocky Staples, USAID/D
Lee Peters, Refugee Counselor
Michael Malinowski, Peshawar

Donald Melville, USAID

William Oldham et al, MSH
David Garner et al, VITA
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